Course Syllabus
COMP 455-001 – Models of Languages and Computation
Fall 2015

Meeting Place: SN 014
Meeting Time: 10:10 - 11:00 MWF

Instructor: Prof. David Plaisted
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Prerequisites: COMP 110 or 401, and MATH 381.

Grading: Homework 30%
          Midterm Exams 38%
          Pop Quizzes 2%
          Final Exam 30%

There will be two mid-semester exams, a final, and probably 9 homework assignments. Most or all of the
homeworks will consist of exercises from the text, often modified slightly. The mid-semester exams will be
on Monday, September 21 and Wednesday, October 28. Exams are in class and are closed book and closed
notes. Be prepared for many pop quizzes, though they don’t count much toward your grade. The grading
algorithm will probably be 30 percent for the final exam, 19 percent for each mid semester exam, 30 percent
for homework, and 2 percent for all pop quizzes put together.

Homework is due at the beginning of class. If the homework is more than 5 minutes late, you will lose
10 percent of the points. If it is not handed in by the end of class, you lose 20 percent. If it is not handed in
by the end of the day, you lose 30 percent. If it is not handed in the next day, you lose 40 percent or more.
You may work on the homework in groups of at most three persons. Homework is VERY important for the
grade and for your understanding of the material.

Class participation and behavior in class can affect your grade, especially if it is on the borderline. Also,
there are a few guidelines for behavior. If you have to leave class for a good reason, you don’t need to wait
until my back is turned. If you need to yawn, do it quietly. Try to enjoy class. Think of it as a course you
chose, even if it is now a required course. It may help.

In my classes most of the students typically get a C or better, but I do not grade on a curve. Typically
90-100 percent is the A range, 80-90 is B range, and so on, with a little more generosity for C and D. Plus
and minus grades are near the boundaries. There are also typically extra credit problems on exams so it
is possible to have well over 100 percent. This course requires some aptitude in theory. If you are weak in
theory (i.e, math), do not be upset if you do not get an A or a B. In the fall of 2002 people did unusually
well and there were 19 A’s, 3 H’s, 9 B’s, and 6 C’s. In the spring of 2002 there were 16 A’s, 23 B’s, 16 C’s, and one D, not counting pluses and minuses and not counting graduate students, most of whom got H’s. The 16 C’s included one C-. Students who do not come to class often, tend to get lower grades unless they have exceptional ability in abstract thinking.

The COMP 455 web page is at www.cs.unc.edu/~plaisted/comp455.

You should be aware that the honor code, which prohibits the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on exams and homework, is in effect.

The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website http://accessibility.unc.edu, call 919-962-8300 or email accessibility@unc.edu.

Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.